

REMARKS

Claims 1-19 are pending. Claim 1 has been amended to correct an antecedent basis issue. Claims 1, 8, 17 and 19 have been amended to replace “in charge of” with “assigned to” in order to improve English usage. No new matter has been presented.

Applicants thank Examiner Robinson-Boyce for the courtesies extended during the in-person interview with Applicants’ representative on May 29, 2008. During the interview, claims 1, 10 and 19 were discussed in light of the 35 USC 102(e) art Anderson (US 7,046,789). Examiner Robinson-Boyce agreed that the user disclosed in Anderson does not appear to be the user recited in claims 1, 10 and 19. Upon receipt of this response, Examiner Robinson-Boyce indicated that she will reevaluate the prior art based on the discussion with Applicants’ representative, and will perform an updated search if necessary.

As discussed during the interview, the claims recite a number of elements in combination. In representative claim 10, for example, this combination includes a memory and a screen generating unit. The memory stores representative information and selection information. The representative information indicates representatives who are assigned to an organization to which a user belongs. The selection information indicates one of the assigned representatives who is selected by the user. The screen generating unit generates a screen that displays the selected representative, and enables the user to select a different one of the assigned representatives.

For example, in one embodiment the representatives can comprise customer service representatives who work for an e-commerce web site. Of all the representatives associated with the e-commerce web site, a group of those representatives can be assigned to support a customer organization to which a user belongs. The site can also enable the user to select which one of the assigned representatives the user prefers to be the user’s customer service representative. For example, when the user navigates to the e-commerce web site to purchase a product, the web site can provide a screen displaying the assigned representative that was previously selected by the user, and enable the user to select a different representative from the group of representatives assigned to the user’s organization.

An example of this is shown in FIGS. 5-7 of the specification. FIG. 5 shows a group of representatives (A105, A211 and A345) who are assigned to a company (C001). FIG. 6 shows which representatives have been selected by the users belonging to the company. For example, user U111 has selected representative A105 to be user U111's salesperson, while user U112 has selected representative A345 to be user U112's salesperson. FIG. 7 shows a commerce web site screen that displays which salesperson (Scott Mize) has been selected by the user (Mr. Nelson) of the user's organization (XYZ Company). The screen also provides a mechanism, such as a pull-down menu, that enables the user to select a different salesperson from the group of salespersons who are assigned to company XYZ Company. This saves time and effort in e-commerce transactions by avoiding a situation in which an inappropriate representative is assigned to a user. In such a situation, the user's representative can expend much time and effort unnecessarily interfacing with other appropriate representatives on behalf of the user to support the user's transaction.

A similar combination of the claimed elements is neither disclosed nor suggested in Anderson. Anderson discloses a call center management system that enables a user of the system, such as a call center manager, to monitor the performance of call center agents. The management system of Anderson allows a user to select a particular agent in order to view performance statistics associated with that agent. See, e.g., Anderson, FIGS. 18, 21, and 22. In contrast, Anderson fails to disclose a combination that includes the assignment of representatives to an organization to which a user belongs, and allowing the user of that organization to select a representative from the representatives who are assigned to the user's organization as claimed. Anderson does not disclose assigning call center agents to an organization, and does not disclose allowing a user of such an organization to select a call center agent from among a group of call center agents assigned to the user's organization.


Accordingly, since the cited art does not teach or suggest, either individually or collectively, the combination of elements required by the claims, the rejections should be withdrawn.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. If it is determined that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

In the event the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, Applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to Deposit Account No. 03-1952 referencing docket no. 116692004800.

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Respectfully submitted,

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